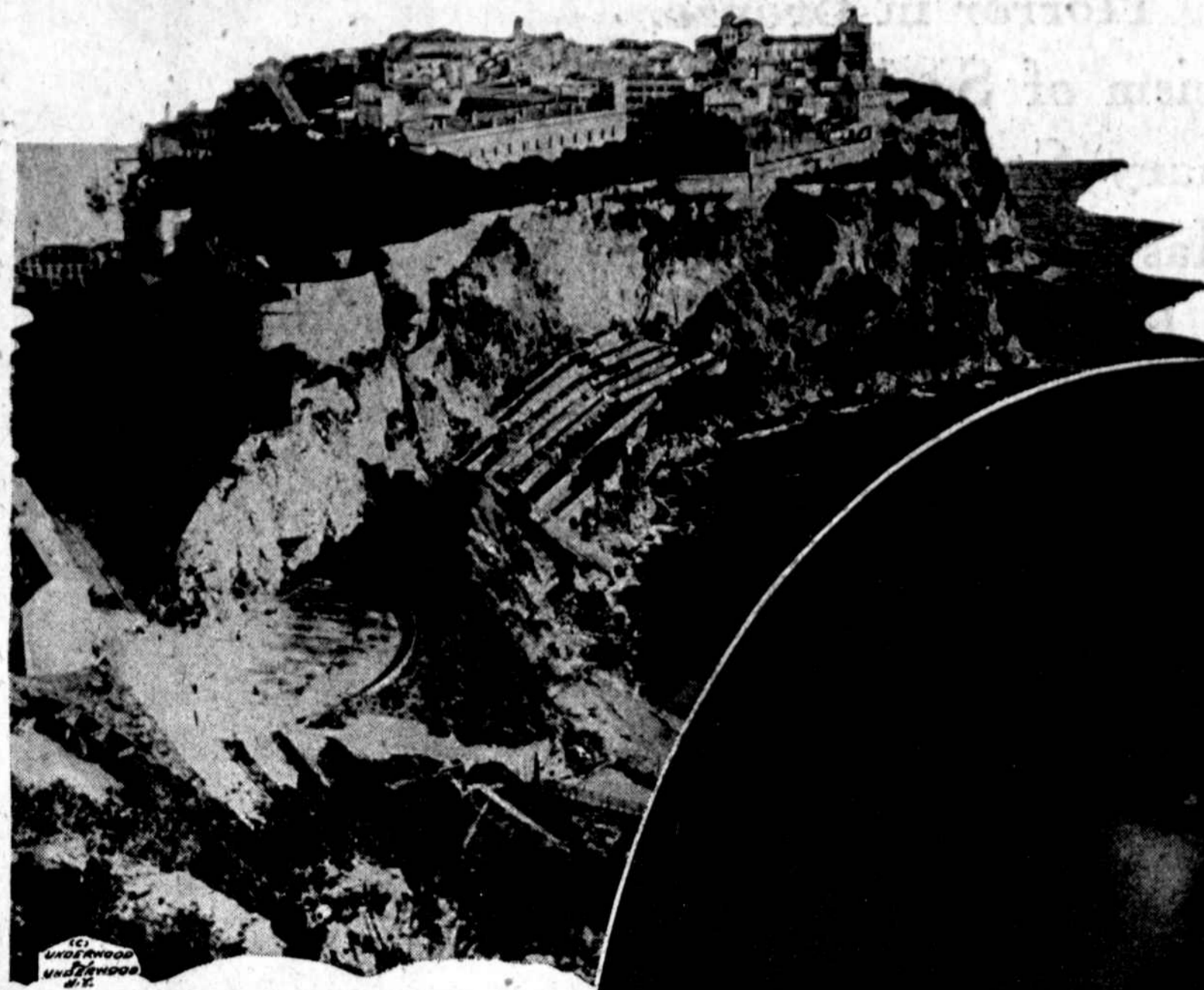


# Astonishing Romance of the Prince of Monaco's "Love-Child"

How the Daughter of a French Peasant Girl Became the Heiress of Monte Carlo's Millions, Will Inherit a Royal Throne and

Has Just Wedded the Son of One of France's Oldest, Noblest Families



The Picturesque Little Principality of Monaco Which Contains the Famous Gambling Resort, Monte Carlo, and Which the "Love-Child" Will Inherit.

PARIS, March 26.  
WHEN the beautiful and youthful Duchess de Valentinois, granddaughter of the Prince of Monaco and heiress to that picturesque little principality, married just the other day the Count Pierre de Polignac, another chapter was written in what is, without doubt, the most astonishing romance of Europe.

For although no account of the grand wedding revealed it, and therefore America could not know it, the lovely bride of this bearer of one of the oldest and most honored names in France is a "love child!" Daughter of Prince Albert of Monaco's now dead son, and true granddaughter of him, as a comparison of the photographs will show, she is. But her mother was a Mlle. Louvet, a girl of peasant stock with whom the present ruler's son became infatuated while in Paris, and the bride who now bears the proud old title of Duchess de Valentinois, was born out of wedlock.

If she lives she will be the Princess of Monaco, and the only occupant of a throne—at least for centuries—upon whom is what history calls the bar sinister.

No fairy tale of Cinderella, no legend of King Cophetua and the beggar maid, approaches the romance with which the little known story of the young Duchess de Valentinois is filled. Only by a series of extraordinary accidents was she lifted to the place she now occupies. Had there been any broken link in that chain, she might have been drawn back to the peasant drudgery of France; or she might have become a reckless toast of Paris, queening it for a brief while and sinking back to tragic obscurity when her beauty had faded; or again, she might have become the wife of some matter-of-fact bourgeois. Instead she has highest place and untold wealth; she is entitled to the homage due to royalty and has for a husband one of the finest, cleanest and most aristocratic young men in France!

Louis, Crown Prince of Monaco, lived the traditional life of young royalty with plenty of money and all the time in the world in which to enjoy himself. Particularly was he fond of Paris and its frivolities. It was here twenty years ago that he met a Mlle. Louvet. Of this meeting there are two stories. One is that he found her while she was still a peasant girl bringing vegetables into the city, and that, struck by her beauty, her freshness, he took her, installed her in semi-royal state, decked her with jewels and strove to turn her into a woman of his own world. The other story is that Mlle. Louvet was working in Paris at the time in some humble occupation but had ceased to be a peasant girl. Whatever their meeting, Crown Prince and peasant girl loved each other, and from this love a girl baby was born.

The Crown Prince, however, failed to savor his sweetheart from the ways of her girlhood. She was violent in her temper, at times quarrelsome, and in the beautiful home which Louis gave her she brought her own family and friends, who were the reverse of those with whom royalty is used to mingling. Rapidly the rift between the two grew.



The Prince of Monaco.

house than as part, at least, a peasant—more princess than commoner. It may even be that Louis knew, too, that he could never have a child by his own lawful wife. At any rate, one night he, with certain officers of his guard, came to the house where the baby and her mother were. There was a struggle, in which the Crown Prince succeeded at last in tearing the daughter away from her mother's arms and swiftly carried her away. Immediately Mme. Louvet made complaint and invoked the French law to give her back her baby. The evidence against her was such, however—or it may be influence—so strong that suddenly she abandoned the fight. And then she sold to the Crown Prince all her rights in the child!

How large this sum of money was is not known, but it was very great. The mother formally gave up every right of her motherhood, pledged herself never to see, to speak to, or to communicate with in any

The Duchess de Valentinois, Daughter of the Crown Prince of Monaco and a Peasant Girl, Who Will Some Day be Princess of Monaco.

way the little girl, and, with her money from the bargain, she disappeared. The baby thereafter was brought up through childhood by her father and her grandfather in the palace of the Princes of Grimaldi.

She was given the finest of educations, she was trained in all the duties and customs of a princess of the ancient line of Grimaldi.

Yet during all these years she was not legitimized—as under the European law a "love child" may be. That she had been told who her mother was is not at all certain. She knew the old Prince as grandfather and the Crown Prince as father. Then as time went on it became sure that the Crown Prince would have no children by his own wife.

And, with the exception of the girl, so rapidly becoming a gracious and lovely woman, there was none in the world to carry on the line of Grimaldi; none to whom the principality of Monaco could descend.

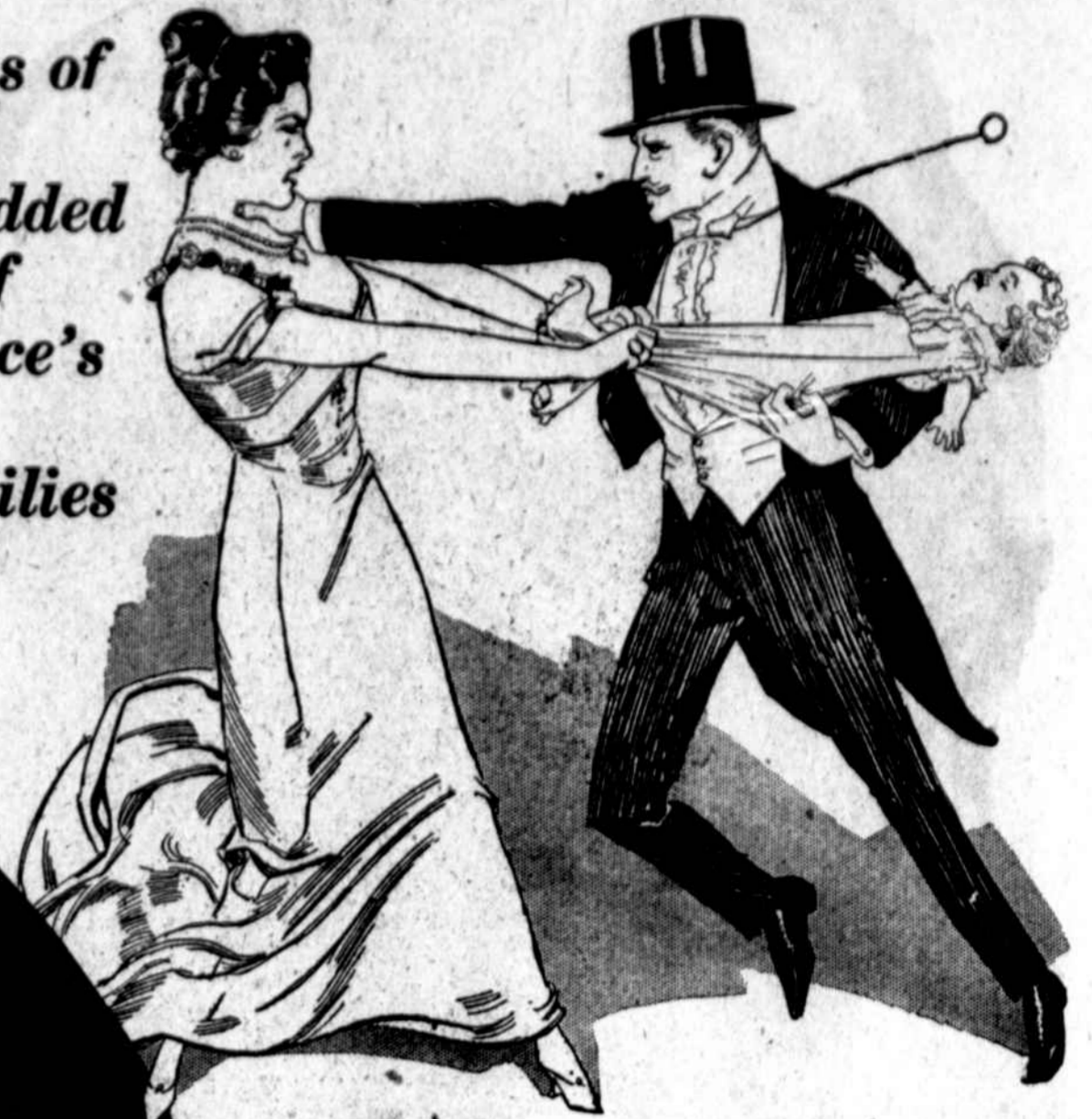
It was with delight that the old Prince saw neither in his granddaughter's actions nor thoughts and not even in her face any trace of her peasant mother. In every way she was a Grimaldi. Her face might have been one of the long line of daughters of that house. She looked indeed enough like her grandfather to be his own daughter.

And so, just before the war, she was legitimized by her grandfather, and with all pomp and ceremony was given the title of the Duchess de Valentinois, which is the name of the Prince of Monaco's French dukedom, of which he is very proud and of which the lovely Diane de Poitiers, that unhappy lady whose tragedy is one of the great loves of history, was once Duchess.

Of course all the other royalties and most of the nobility of Europe knew the origin of the little Princess. But her own sweetness and beauty and fineness would have stopped unkind remarks or actions, even if her grandfather's wealth and power and the knowledge of certain other similar pages in most of their own family histories had not. During the war the daughter of prince and peasant worked with utmost devotion both in the Red Cross Society of France and as an actual, bona fide nurse at the military hospital of Beausoleil at Nice.

It was there that she met the Count de Polignac. She was only sixteen then, but the young man saw in her his ideal of womanhood. The war claimed his life, however, and there was a promise that made him content to wait. But when the war was ended there was no longer use of waiting. She redeemed her promise.

When the Duchess takes the throne of Monaco her husband will have twice have had to change his name, by the way, and will long since have ceased to be a Polignac. By his marriage he becomes



"The Crown Prince succeeded at last in tearing the baby from its mother's arms."

the Duke de Valentinois and France will allow him to change both nationality and name. The former Count de Polignac, now Duke of Valentinois, must formally become a Grimaldi of Monaco to be in a position to take his place beside his wife to rule the destinies of his adopted people.

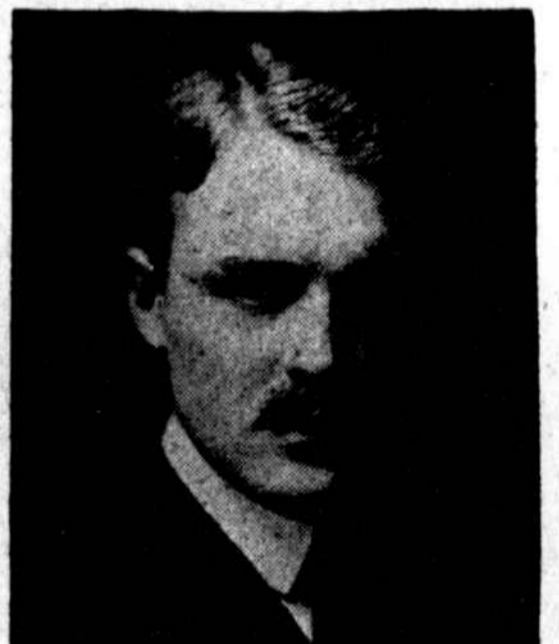
During the war several times the menace of Monaco, as certain statesmen loved to call it, figured in the news because of the large numbers of Germans living there. The statements were, as usual, grossly exaggerated. But the possibility of a recurrence of such a thing is obviated by the marriage being discussed. A Frenchman always remains a Frenchman no matter where he is, and the influence over the little principality will be strongly French. However, if there had been the slightest evidence or appearance of the marriage having been one of international convenience no one who has ever seen the Duchess, or even looked at her picture, will think of the Count de Polignac as a martyr to the political necessities of France.

What will happen to the great gambling place which has made Monaco famous and infamous, the Monte Carlo Syndicate, after the lately wedded two take power is uncertain. Probably the matter will be settled before then. The gambling syndicate pays all the expenses of the little principality and an enormous bonus to the reigning house besides. It is known, though, that the present Princess does not approve of the venture and it has long been said that when the present lease runs out it will not be renewed.

How many millions this astonishing royal Cinderella will inherit is unknown; many hundreds, certainly, beside the immense estates and other wealth of the old Prince.

It is a curious coincidence that the father of the Duchess was snatched away from his own mother much as she was from hers. The Crown Prince is an only son born of his father's first marriage to Lady Mary Hamilton, sister of the late Duke of Hamilton. She is now the wife of Prince Tassilo Festetics, head of the Hungarian house of Festetics. When she finally abandoned the Prince of Monaco she fled from his palace to Florence, taking with her the little boy, then about two years old. Albert, then only Crown Prince, caused his father, Charles III., to make a demand upon the Italian Government for the surrender of the child to his representatives as having been unlawfully abducted from his dominions.

The Italian Government thought it well to do this and sent officers to the hotel where the Princess was stopping, under instructions to take the child by force if she refused to give it up. She did refuse and they did try. But the royal mother made such a noise that Grand Duchess Marie of Russia was attracted to the scene. She threatened the Italians with the wrath of Russia if they did not give up. Not wishing to be embroiled just then with Russia the Italian Government politely withdrew. It was not for some years after that the present Prince gained the custody of his son, and then by amicable arrangement.



The Count de Polignac, Who Had to Change His Name to Wed.

The house of Grimaldi, the ruling family of Monaco, is one of the most ancient and most important of the old Genoese Republic. The quarrels between the Papal and popular Guelphs and the imperial and aristocratic Ghibellines, in Italy, forced certain members of the Grimaldi family to expatriate themselves. Some of these conquered Monaco near the end of the thirteenth century. They maintained their possession with difficulty, but succeeded in enlarging their domain by the acquisition of Mentone and Roquebrune. It was not before 1419 that the possession of the principality was made certain, in spite of the Genoese opposition.

Louis XII., by declaration on February 20, 1512, recognized the sovereignty and absolute independence of Monaco. Passing from the protectorate of Spain, then mistress of Milan, Richelieu and the Prince Honore II. established a French protectorate. The great attachment of the Monagasque princes to the crown caused Louis XIII. to show his royal favor by giving the Duchy of Valentinois with its peerage and the Marquisat de Baux, the Count of Cardillac, to the principality; Louis XIV. also gave the rank and title of foreign prince to the Monagasque rulers and made Prince Louis his ambassador at the Vatican.

The Salic laws did not exist in France except in the Capetian House. In the case of the Duchy and Peerage of Valentinois, the title which carried the domains and properties could descend to a daughter, who passed it on to her eldest son, but the peerage ceased with no direct male heir. Thus twice has the peerage of the Duchy of Valentinois reverted to the crown, when it could only be revived by a new investiture. The first time Louis XII. gave it to Caesar Borgia; the second revival was when Francois I. gave it to Diane de Poitiers.

The Count of Thorigny, who became Prince Consort with Louise-Hippolyte, lost his spouse shortly after this event and ruled alone for a while, when he abdicated in favor of his son, Honore III., took back the title of the Duke of Valentinois and came to Paris, taking the house of the Duchess de Galliera, since become the old Austro-Hungarian Embassy.

Honore III. finished his days in sadness and despair, for his little principality and his people were taken from him by an uprising and the French Revolution. He had married a Choiseul-Stainville, who came to France in those troublous times to get her children, was arrested, imprisoned and condemned at the same time as the poet Andre Chenier. She escaped the guillotine for a time by a subterfuge, for which she later denounced herself and was executed.

All this history, and more, the Cinderella Princess inherits.